

AN
AUTHENTIC REPORT,
OF AN
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE, ON THE IMPORTANT SUBJECT
OF
MEDICAL REFORM;
DELIVERED IN THE SCHOOL OF
ANATOMY, MEDICINE, AND SURGERY,
PETER-STREET,

ON FRIDAY, 30TH OCTOBER, 1835.

BY
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LECTURE,

&c. &c.

GENTLEMEN,

ACCORDING to the arrangements by which this institution is to be conducted, during the present session, it becomes my duty to appear before you to-day. The position which I occupy, however honourable in itself, grateful to my pride, or flattering to my vanity, it may be, yet, it is not without its asperities ; for, indeed, he should be possessed of more than an ordinary share, both of confidence and information, who would venture to address the numerous and respectable assemblage, with which I am surrounded, without feelings of self-distrust and embarrassment. I will not detain you with prefatory remarks, but at once proceed to make such observations as seem to me best calculated, to interest and instruct the junior part of my hearers.

If we turn our attention to man, in the abstract, and observe the progressive development of his body and mind, what a lesson of practical wisdom will be unfolded to our comprehension: viewed in early infancy, he appears alike, weak in corporeal and intellectual strength, yet, in him we may recognize either the embryo of future greatness, or perhaps the germ of infamy and desparation, but certainly, as yet, the untutored agent of wonderful capability! yes, I repeat it, the untutored agent of wonderful capability, for, what is there in this world placed beyond the sphere of human achievements? “By the intelligence of man, wild animals have been subdued, tamed, and reduced to slavery: by his courage, battles have been fought and victories won; by his labour, marshes have been drained, forests cleared, and the earth cultivated; by his reflection, time has been computed, space measured, and the movements of the planets ascertained;” and, by his ingenuity, machinery has been invented, the ocean traversed, discoveries made, and distant countries united !!!

It is much to be deplored that the bright pages of the history of man, are so frequently sullied by descriptions of his errors, and that the great power with which he is invested, is not confined to the accomplishment of those noble deeds, for which he was mainly created; and that he should outstep the precincts of divine command, in perpetrating crimes

degrading to the human character, and unknown to the brute creation! Gentlemen, let us now dispassionately consider what are the tangible, and legitimate sources of human achievements? In reference to this question, I think it will cost us but little reflection, until we shall arrive at the inevitable conclusion, that education is the direct road to information, and that knowledge is the main spring of power. Is not the field of victory won by the skill, and judgment, of the educated and experienced General, rather than by the physical strength of his army? Is it not his knowledge of the science of navigation which assists the accomplished mariner to guide his ship through the trackless deep? And is it not his knowledge of the laws of attraction which enables the philosopher to calculate and predict, with unerring precision, the motions of the heavenly bodies, the ebbing and flowing of the tides, and many other phenomena of equal interest, which must appear to be miraculous and unaccountable to the man of uneducated mind.

One of the grand characteristics of the human species, is an intellectual power, and a consequent susceptibility of education. If we suppose man, from his infancy, placed in a desert, and thereby shut out from the usual sources of information, he would not, perhaps, far exceed the wild animals which had been his companions. I am perfectly aware, that

there are exceptions to this general rule ; but it is to the rule, and not to the exceptions, I wish to call your attention. Then, since it is by education human power is mainly developed, I will make a few observations on this important subject.

The education, of a professional man may be divided into two species, one of which I will call common, the other special. By the former, I mean that species of education which is common to most of those persons, who are, in accordance with the usage of society, designated gentlemen ; and by the latter, I understand a peculiar form of education, by which a knowledge of any particular profession is acquired. When early years have been devoted to the acquisition of a liberal education, the seeds of reason, which were sown by the Author of nature, become quickly matured, the judgment formed, and the youth begins to contemplate how he shall most advantageously spend his future life : he turns his thoughts in pursuit of that darling of our choice, that phantom of our imagination, called happiness, which although we are all anxiously pursuing, few can obtain. Here, I may observe, that the disposer of all things, in the infinity of his wisdom, has varied our tastes and dispositions, and likewise the objects of our desires. We accordingly find one man pursue happiness in the sports of the field ; a second seeks her in the retirement of his study ; and whilst a third can enjoy nothing but sobriety and

riches, a fourth glories in debauchery and extravagance ! Thus, Gentlemen, you may perceive, whilst that great developer of events, time, by his rapid progression matures the man, his wheel of perpetual motion never fails in turning up new objects and pursuits for human enjoyment. Amidst this varied scene of pursuits and employments, the medical profession has fallen to our lot, and when we reflect upon the sources whence it sprung, and the noble ends for which it was called into existence, we have abundant reason to be satisfied with our choice. It is not my intention, at present, to give you a systematic review of the origin and progress of the healing art ; although such a narrative might amuse the medical historian, it would be nearly barren of useful instruction. I shall, therefore, merely observe, that it grew out of human misery, that it was first cultivated by the ministers of religion, who combined the works of spiritual, with those of temporal, mercy ; that it has been progressively advancing for many centuries ; and that, in its present improved state, there is no profession so interesting, so learned, and so demonstratively useful as it is !!! Gentlemen, I speak not in the language of the advocate or partisan, I am stating facts which require but little argument for their illustration.

The attentive consideration of any one natural object, is deemed interesting by the man of philosophic mind ; if so, how very interesting must the

profession be considered, which has for its objects, the preservation of health, the cure of disease, the prolongation of life, or the making easy of death. Oh! said the philosopher, there is no study so interesting to man, as man himself. When I say ours is the most learned of the learned professions, I don't wish to institute any invidious comparison; but, it must at once be admitted, that the profession is very learned, which includes within the comprehensive grasp of its study, all those sciences through which alone a correct knowledge of the qualities and properties of all natural objects can be attained. The utility of the medical profession cannot be questioned, when it is a well-known fact, that its members are, by the judicious employment of the power it supplies, enabled to restore health to the sick, sight to the blind, and, in many instances, to deprive disease of its victim, and death of his prey. In fact, the healing art is so scientific in its study and so varied in its objects, that while it affords the philosopher abundant scope for the exercise of his genius, and the worldling an opportunity of realizing riches and honor, it furnishes the charitable and benevolent with the means of allaying human suffering.

Gentlemen, whilst thus remarking upon the profession you are about to adopt, I feel I should be guilty of partiality, and consequently a dereliction of duty, were I not to fairly present both sides of the

picture for your serious consideration. When you enter upon your studies, you must not expect to recline on a bed of roses. The troubled ocean presents a smooth surface to the eye of the distant observer, and it is only he who is placed in the midst of the breakers, who can form a just estimate of the violence of the storm : in like manner, to a person who does not look beyond the surface of things, our profession would appear to be most desirable, and that its pursuit must necessarily lead to prosperity and happiness. But, beware of the delusion ; you should in the first instance, make up your mind to hard study, and be determined to overcome difficulties by patience and perseverance, and calculate on consuming time, and much of the “ midnight oil” in the acquisition of knowledge. When you have surmounted the drudgery of the student, you must expect to meet with vexatious disappointments, and learn how to bear with indifference—the slight and ingratitude of false friends ; you should likewise be prepared to ward off the shafts of calumny, which may be aimed at your professional reputation, by jealous rivals. Gentlemen, I speak not of visionary objects, nor in the language of fiction, or idle declamation ; no, I speak of things “ *quæque ipse miserrima vidi et quorum pars magna fui.*”

Well, notwithstanding the numerous, and various impediments which interrupt and annoy the medical

practitioner in his journey through life, still even in this respect, he cannot complain of exclusive sufferings, for it appears to be so ordained by Providence, that all classes, and grades, in society, must bear their proportion of the alloy of this world ; and, indeed, I believe that the study and practice of our profession, are not more disagreeable than those of others ; nay, more, to a person of an intelligent, and well regulated mind, they must be both gratifying and instructive. To contemplate the wonderful phenomena of life, to observe and study the laws of disease, to watch the secret workings of nature, are circumstances so obviously interesting, that few can fail to admire them. However, Gentlemen, remember our profession is one of great responsibility ; it, therefore, behoves every man who is anxious to discharge his duty conscientiously, and to practise with credit and an easy mind, to be well informed. To point out such a course of study as I think necessary for the observance of the medical and surgical student, is a duty, which I shall now attempt to fulfil.

The products of nature are so intimately blended together that it is impossible to become perfectly acquainted with any one of them, by studying that one abstractedly : in like manner, the different sciences are so united by a chain of mutual dependance, that you cannot arrive at a perfect knowledge of any one of them, without studying many which have relation to that one : hence it is, that medical information, like

all treasures, is difficult of attainment. The student who wishes to be well informed, either in medicine or surgery, should proceed slowly, and, as he goes on, pay particular attention to the numerous sciences, the assemblage of which constitute the splendid edifice of the medical profession.

Amongst the various sciences which demand the attention of the pupil, Anatomy justly claims the highest rank ; it is not only of the first-rate importance, but a knowledge of it is indispensably necessary, both to the study and practice of surgery. Anatomy, strictly speaking, means the science of dissection : it is, therefore, through it alone we can acquire a knowledge of the composition and structure of organised beings. It is his knowledge of Anatomy which conducts the skilful surgeon with confidence, ease, and safety, through the most difficult and dangerous operations which fall within the range of surgery. On the other hand, it is his ignorance of Anatomy which oftentimes induces an unskilful practitioner to hesitate and defer an operation, which is in itself simple, until the original disease shall have advanced, so as to get beyond the reach of operation ; in fine, until the patient fall a sacrifice to the supineness, and hesitation of his surgeon. We have but too many melancholy instances of the truth of what I assert exemplified in acute affections of the larynx, and in cases of strangulated hernia, where the fate of the patients

entirely depend upon the prompt decision of the surgeon, and the speedy performance of an operation. Thus you may perceive, that it is difficult to draw a line of distinction between Anatomy and operative surgery. In order to make the ensuing course of lectures as instructive as possible, we will perform all the known surgical operations on the dead subject, when discussing the nature and treatment of the accidents, and diseases which may render them necessary on the living.

Physiology is a science at once interesting and useful, it comprises a knowledge of the actions of the individual organs, and of the various functions carried on in the living body, and must, therefore, be considered of the utmost importance, both to the physician and surgeon; for, without a knowledge of the natural actions and functions, we should be unable to judge of them when deranged, or set them to rights when out of order. For example, a surgeon ignorant of the chymical phenomena attendant on the function of respiration, could not appreciate the value of the operation of bronchotomy, in certain affections of the larynx, and trachea, nor understand the principle upon which it could prove useful. Again, to a physician unacquainted with the doctrine of the circulation, it would appear very extraordinary, that the pulse of a new born infant could beat 120 or 130 strokes in a minute, whilst that of an old person will not exceed 60 or 70, yet both

be in perfect health. The necessity of a knowledge of Physiology, both to the physician and surgeon, is so obvious that it would be superfluous to say more on the subject at present.

Thus, Gentlemen, you may perceive that it is through the sciences of Anatomy and Physiology, we become acquainted with the natural structure and functions of the living body; but the animal machine is so complicated by the multiplicity of dissimilar textures which enter into its composition, and by the numerous operations which are incessantly going forward, it is extremely liable to derangement. The science which involves in its consideration the morbid phenomena, to which the human fabric is so much exposed, is called Pathology.

Pathology is a science which has been much cultivated of late years, and, indeed, I believe I may in truth assert, that it is now, with medical men, the most fashionable, if not the most useful study of the day. Before the time of Morgagni, Pathology was but little attended to; morbid dissections were neglected, consequently, disease was very imperfectly understood. In those times pulmonary consumption, ascites, jaundice, and many other complaints of local origin, were treated on general principles. The theory having been false, the practice was bad, and the result usually fatal. It is to the unremitting attention, and Pathological acumen, with which Laënnec prosecuted his observations on the morbid

affections to which the thoracic viscera are liable, that we are indebted for our present knowledge of pectoral complaints. Were it not for the discoveries made by Hunter and Scarpa, relative to the morbid changes of structure to which the arterial system is subject, we might still perhaps, be ignorant of the best mode of treating aneurisms. I mention those facts, in order to show that the cultivation of Pathology has not only been useful as regards the diagnosis, but likewise in reference to the treatment of disease.

When we reflect upon the advantages which have resulted both to science, and the public, from the study of Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology, is not the reflection well calculated to excite a feeling of pride and gratification in the minds of those who are their willing votaries? And ought we not for ever venerate the memories of the immortal dead, who first opened the way to their cultivation? For my own part, I am quite at a loss to know why the interesting study of the animal economy should be consigned to the physician and surgeon. It is long since Natural Philosophy has arrested the attention, and entertained the genius of the most distinguished men that ever the world produced; such as Bacon, Newton, &c. &c. Now, I would ask, what branch of Natural Philosophy is so interesting as Anatomy and Physiology? Where are the powers and beauties of Nature so clearly delineated as in the

arrangements of the component parts of the animal body, where every particle has its function to perform, and every function contributes to the well-being of the individual? These questions are unanswerable, and I think it is extremely probable, that now the dissection of human bodies has been sanctioned by the British Legislature, that in the course of a few years, when the prejudice which has hitherto existed in the public mind against it, shall subside, that Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology, will be studied with as much attention as any branch of Natural Philosophy. The philosopher may boast of the light which the telescope and microscope have shed upon the scientific world; the engineer may descant upon the matchless power of steam, by the almost magic influence of which manufactories are put in motion, and their produce transferred to a foreign land. But, in my opinion, the anatomist has much more reason to eulogise the dissecting-knife, by which he is enabled to remove the veil from Nature, to unravel the almost inscrutable intricacies of animal texture, and, in this way, inspect with pleasure and admiration the hitherto mysterious operations of a Supreme Being! It is to its agency, the sciences of Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology, owe their cultivation, and socièty at large, all the benefits which physic and surgery, can bestow.

The sciences, which have for their primary objects the doctrine and treatment of the various accidents

and diseases to which the human body is liable, have been fictitiously divided into physic and surgery: I say fictitiously, for, the most warm advocates for distinction have failed to point out, in a satisfactory manner, the line of demarcation by which physic and surgery are separated. It was, in former times, supposed by some, that surgeons ought to confine themselves to the performance of operations, and the treatment of accidents, and such diseases as affect the exterior of the body; and, that it was the physicians' exclusive right to treat all internal complaints. Such imaginary shades of distinction have nearly vanished before the bright light of intelligence, which illumines the age in which we live. Although, even still, certain members of the profession, influenced by choice or other circumstances, chiefly confine themselves to the practice of one particular branch, amongst students no such selections should be recognised. You should indiscriminately, and with equal assiduity, devote your exertions to the acquisition of a knowledge of all the branches of sciences which relate to the healing art. It is impossible to shackle the human mind, and absurd to attempt to controul public opinion; and by this tribunal it has been already decided, that the man who is best qualified by his superior information, to cure disease, no matter what his professional title may be, will, in the great majority of instances, succeed in obtaining public confidence.

I am well aware that high patronage, sectarian influence, puffing, mannerism, and servility, will often have the effect of securing an ephemeral celebrity for persons ill qualified by their professional attainments, to take care of the public health. But, believe me, a reputation obtained through such unworthy means is seldom of long duration. “Physic and surgery have in the human body the sphere of their action ; both have the same objects and the same ends,” viz. the preservation of health, the cure of disease, the prolongation of life, or the making easy of death !

Gentlemen, a knowledge of the various sciences, already mentioned, would merely enable you to understand the composition, and functions, of the human body, together with many of the important phenomena connected with it, both in health and disease ; but, remember, your ultimate object is to learn how to rectify the numerous deviations from Nature to which the frail fabric is liable. This cannot be accomplished by the study of man in the abstract. No, you must extend your views, and in so doing, cultivate an acquaintance with those sciences, through which you may learn the effects of foreign agents, on the living body. Amongst those, Natural Philosophy will be found useful in explaining some of the functions of the animal body, and the laws to which they are subject. For example, it is impossible that a person, unacquainted with the general principles of

Optics, can form an accurate idea of the manner in which the phenomena of vision are accomplished, even in the healthy state of the eye; how it is varied by the alteration in form which the lens naturally undergoes by age; or how the sight can be improved by the use of well selected glasses. It is by our knowledge of Acoustics we are enabled to understand the functions of the ear; Hydraulics assist us in comprehending the circulation of the blood; and an acquaintance with the doctrine of levers is absolutely necessary to the perfect understanding of the phenomena of muscular action.

The great majority of those substances, called Medicines, are obtained from the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, and without an intimate acquaintance with their composition, and their effects on the human body, our knowledge of man would be of little advantage, either to the public or ourselves. The requisite information on this subject can be acquired only through Botany, and Chymistry. The study of Botany is a very interesting pursuit; it leads to an acquaintance with the mysterious workings of Animated Nature, in her most simple forms of structure and organization. The utility of a knowledge of Botany, to a medical man, is now so generally admitted, that the bye-laws of nearly all the medical corporations render attendance, on Botanical lectures, a matter of imperative necessity.

Chymistry is a science of such general utility that

few should remain unacquainted with its principles ; it not only explains to us many of the wonderful phenomena of Nature, but there is scarcely one of the arts in which it cannot be employed with advantage. To a medical student a knowledge of Chymistry is of indispensable importance. It is by Chymical analysis we become acquainted with the component parts of the animal body ; and animal Chymistry and Physiology are so blended together, that it is impossible to know one of them well, and be ignorant of the other. Pharmacy is that branch of Chymistry which relates to the compounding of Medicines, and an ignorance of it might lead the practitioner into an error, which would prove at once fatal to his patient, and ruinous to his own professional reputation. It is not exactly my province to give you instances, illustrative of the various mistakes into which the individual might fall, who would presume to write prescriptions without knowing the Chymical habitudes of the various ingredients which he ventured to combine.

Gentlemen, be not deceived, and imagine that a knowledge of the different sciences I have mentioned would, in itself, be sufficient to make you good physicians and surgeons : on the contrary, you might be most profound Naturalists, and deeply read in science, and yet ignorant of many important circumstances relating to our profession, and consequently, bad practitioners both in medicine and

surgery. For, there are numerous well known phenomena connected with both animate, and inanimate nature, which cannot be explained by the light of science, or revealed by our present doctrines of final causes ! For instance, why do springs recoil ? Why do the planets move in their respective orbits, and yet retain their relative situations ? Why do certain salts, when brought in contact, decompose each other ? In reply, I may be told that springs recoil because they are elastic ; that the positions, and relations, of the planets, and the decomposition of the salts, are determined by the laws of attraction. Well, thus much I know myself ; but, I wish to be informed *why* only certain substances are elastic, whilst others are not so ; and *why* the laws of attraction are in force, and *how* they are executed ? These are questions which I defy the chymists and philosophers of the day to answer in a satisfactory manner. Now, let us, for a moment, turn our attention to what, in my opinion, might be fairly designated the *mysteries* of the animal kingdom. What physiologist of the age can tell *why* the brain is the seat of the intellectual faculties, or *how* it performs its functions ? We cannot explain *how* the nerves feel, the muscles contract, or the stomach digests ; we are likewise ignorant of the manner in which glandular secretion is accomplished. Our present knowledge of the laws of the animal economy does not enable us to account for these

interesting phenomena, yet, we are convinced of the facts, by the unquestionable authorities of observation and experience ! Gentlemen, my object is not to mystify your studies, but to convince you, if I can, of the absolute necessity of personal observation, in acquiring a practical knowledge of your profession. This kind of information cannot be obtained by merely attending to lectures, demonstrations, dissections, and reading ; the symptoms and effects of disease can be but imperfectly described by the best lecturers ; and, why certain articles of the *Materia Medica* produce their specific influence on the human body, and on the diseases for the cure of which they are administered, could never be obtained by a reference to their Chymical properties. It was neither by our knowledge of the laws of the animal economy, nor of Chymistry, that we have learned, that camphor is a stimulant, opium a sedative, hippo an emetic, aloes a purgative, and such like. No, our information on these subjects is derived from observation and experience ; yes, observation at the bed-side of sickness, and experience in the wide field of disease.

Gentlemen, it may, perhaps, appear to some of you, that the plan of study which I have just sketched for your observance, is too laborious, and that its adoption would require more time and attention than you can bestow. But, remember the awful responsibility you have incurred, by embarking

in the medical profession ; that you are to become the life-guards of the public ; that you will, in all probability, be the medical attendants of your nearest relatives and best friends ; and, above all, remember the inextinguishable pain of remorse, and self-reproach, which must for ever torment you, should your conscience tell you that a valuable life has been sacrificed to your culpable ignorance. There is now but little, if any, excuse for ignorance. You are surrounded by the most favourable opportunities of acquiring a perfect knowledge of your profession.

By a retrospective view we may at once perceive, that in no department of society is the march of improvement so advantageously displayed, as in The Medico-Chirurgical School of Dublin. About thirty years ago there were only two schools of medicine and surgery in this city, and they were but poorly attended by students ; I allude to those connected with Trinity College, and the College of Surgeons. At this period Clinical instruction was scarcely thought of. In 1810, my former colleague, Mr. Kirby, established the Peter-street School, and by so doing incurred the disapprobation of some envious persons, who seemed to think that they had a right to a monopoly in teaching. Mr. Kirby had, at first, much difficulties to contend with ; but by his talent and perseverance, he ultimately triumphed over his jealous opponents. Encouraged by the

success which attended his exertions in Peter-street, for the long period of fourteen years, some Medical Gentlemen deemed it a safe speculation to found other schools upon the same principle. Accordingly the one in Park-street was brought into existence in 1824; and, in a few years afterwards, the Richmond School was established. In 1832, the enemies of this institution concocted a new plan, by which they imagined they could, by one clever stroke, demolish for ever, not only the existence, but the very name, of a Peter-street School. It would be indelicate in me, to occupy your time in describing the unworthy means resorted to, on that occasion, by a miscalculating party; or to detail the manner in which their designs were counteracted, their machinations frustrated, and their signal defeat accomplished.—*[great applause.]*—The success which attended the efforts of those interested in the preservation of this establishment, was such as to give a fresh impetus to teaching in Dublin; and the consequence was, that, in the succeeding year, the Digges-street and the Mark-street Schools were founded. We have now seven schools in this city, in which the various branches of science, which relate to medical education, are regularly taught. We have, likewise, seven hospitals, in which Clinical instruction, both in medicine and surgery, is given; besides a great number of lying-in hospitals and dispensaries. The great majority of these various institutions are well

attended by pupils, and their conductors are vying with each other in communicating information to their respective classes.

Thus, Gentlemen, you may perceive, from what I have stated, that the medical profession in Ireland, and I may likewise include England and Scotland, has advanced considerably within the last thirty years. I am disposed to attribute this advancement, in part to the growing intelligence, and the spirit of scientific improvement, which characterises the present times; but, more especially, to the vast number of persons now engaged in its pursuit, and being unable to obtain, by practice, a respectable support for themselves and families, have devoted their energies to teaching. I feel, that, as far as a desire for knowledge and the stimulus of necessity are capable of improving our profession, either as regards science or the public good, we have little to expect beyond what has been already accomplished; until a host of musty and absurd charters, and incongruous acts of parliament, shall be superseded by a sweeping bill of MEDICAL REFORM!—*[here the lecturer was interrupted by a burst of applause, which issued simultaneously from all parts of the lecture-room: when the noise subsided he resumed, and said:]*—Gentlemen, I perceive that I have touched a chord which vibrates in unison with your feelings; that I have sounded a note which strikes euphoniously on your ears. It may appear to you

somewhat strange, that this is the only school in Dublin, in which the important subject of medical reform has been introduced ; or any attempt made to give to the Irish students an idea of the present position of a question, which must necessarily excite in their minds feelings of the deepest interest and anxiety. Be not deceived, and suppose that the omission has been accidental ; or that it was the result of a feeling in the minds of the lecturers who have preceded me, that the topic was too insignificant to merit their attention. I am persuaded that the real cause was an indisposition on the part of those, who either at present enjoy, or hope to partake, at some future period, of the sweets of corporate patronage and monopoly, to embroil themselves in the discussion of a subject which must naturally lead to contemplations and forebodings, of a most disastrous, and melancholy nature. As I have no gloomy anticipations of this kind to contend with, I hope I will be able to give you some general idea of the enormous inconsistencies, and the multitudinous abuses, which pervade all departments of the medical profession in Great Britain and Ireland ; as well as some notion of the present prospect of their speedy abolition. Previously to entering upon this complicated, but very interesting topic, I must bespeak your indulgence, for the numerous defects and omissions which must necessarily attach to a discussion of such limited duration as that which the

usage of the lecture-room will constrain me to observe.

In order to render myself intelligible to the junior part of my auditors, I beg to remind them, that the profession, in these countries, consists of three divisions or branches, viz. Physic, Surgery, and Pharmacy. We have, accordingly, Universities and Colleges of Physicians, Colleges of Surgeons, and Apothecaries' Halls. These bodies are incorporated by their respective charters, and possess a power of making bye-laws for their own government, and of prescribing such courses of education as they may deem proper, for the observance of those persons who wish to graduate in, or become members of, their corporations. With a view to make the present system of medical economy as effective even as *it* might be, I maintain, that the different sections in England, Ireland, and Scotland, should, in accordance with the idea we have of an united kingdom, be assimilated, and placed in every respect on the same footing; and that there should be no such thing, as a monopoly of teaching, tolerated in any of them. However, the reverse of my position is the fact; for, very few of those corporations possess any thing in common, which relates either to the advancement of science, or the public welfare. On the contrary, for the most part, they differ in their curricula, or courses of education; in their mode of examination; and, in the privileges

conferred by the possession of the Degrees or Diplomas granted by the same section of the profession, but, in different parts of the United Kingdom. In order to prove the truth of my assertion, I will now proceed to remark upon the numerous discrepancies, which exist amongst the medical corporations of Great Britain and Ireland.

I will commence with the Universities, by calling your attention to the difference which prevails amongst them, as regards the course of education prescribed for the observance of medical students. Time will not admit of my going into a detail of the various items of study laid down by them ; I will, therefore, select for argument, the one which, of all others, appears to me to be of paramount importance ; I mean that of attendance on hospital practice. I have already told you, that it is only by a strict and vigilant attention, in the chambers, and at the bed-side of the sick, that a student can possibly become acquainted with the important, but mysterious phenomena of disease, and thereby acquire that species of information, by which alone he can qualify himself, either to cure, or alleviate human suffering.

By a perusal of the rules and regulations which have been issued by the Dublin and Edinburgh Universities, for many years, it may be seen that they required, till very lately, but a six-months' certificate for attendance on hospital practice, from

candidates for the Degree of M.D., whilst those of Glasgow and Saint Andrew's, demanded twelve months ; and nothing short of three years, would satisfy the fastidious law-makers at Aberdeen ! Does not this circumstance in itself amount to a satisfactory proof, that some of these institutions must be wrong in their mode of acting in this respect ; and that there is an obvious necessity for the interposition of legislative interference, with a view to strike a proper average, which ought to be common to them all. If we look to the same source for information, we may learn that there has been a similar want of uniformity, in the mode of granting Medical Degrees in these Universities. For instance, it is not long since the preceding examinations were conducted in Latin, both in Dublin and Edinburgh ; whilst in Glasgow, the examiners condescended to speak plain English ; and, in Saint Andrew's, they were liberal enough to grant Degrees in Medicine without submitting the candidates to the vulgar and humiliating test of any examination whatever !—*[laughter.]*—Gentlemen, I am not much surprised by your laugh of incredulity, at the announcement of this extraordinary, and almost incredible fact ; but, believe me, when I assure you, that my statement is perfectly true. A few years since, any Gentleman who felt anxious to obtain the Degree of M.D. from Saint Annrew's, might, without much trouble gratify his ambition, by directing a letter to the

Registrar of the University, expressive of his desire; and, provided it contained certain enclosures, he would be honoured, in the course of a few days, by the receipt of a Degree, bearing the sign manual of the Senatus Academicus! This mode of proceeding, though ludicrous it may appear, was in constant operation for a great number of years; and it was not until the possession of such documents was looked upon, by the public, as a proof of ignorance, rather than the just reward of *tried* merit, that their sale fell off, and that it was deemed expedient to alter the System. Accordingly, the managers of the medical department of the University, framed new rules and regulations, I believe in 1826; and, in order to convince the world of the sincerity of their repentance, for past misconduct, they commenced by adopting the following solemn, and austere resolution: “That no Degree shall be conferred on an absent candidate.”—[*the reading of this passage excited roars of laughter.*—]I do not think the former proceedings of Saint Andrew’s much worse than the absurd practice, adopted elsewhere, of conducting examinations in a language, which, when taken in a conversational sense, may be considered dead in the medical profession. What can be more ludicrous to human conception, than to imagine two persons discussing in a language, with which, in all probability, they are but imperfectly acquainted, some abstruse point of science,

of which they, perhaps, know less? Yet, we find that very classical, and aristocratic body, “The Royal College of Physicians in London,” still adhering, with a superstitious fidelity, to the old, but now nearly deserted path of folly, which has been too long trodden by medical corporations, under the mistaken notion, that it imparted learning and dignity to its blind followers!

Gentlemen, my next position is, that any person, who has fairly obtained, either a Degree in Medicine, or a Diploma in Surgery, or Pharmacy, from any of the medical corporations in the United Kingdom, should be at liberty to practise his profession without restraint or annoyance, in any, and every part, of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Such, however, is not the case; for, “The Royal College of Physicians in London” are empowered, by their charter, to punish by law, all physicians who would dare to prescribe for a patient, either in London or within seven miles of it, without having first submitted themselves to the humiliating ordeal, of going through *their* classical examination, and paying enormous sums of money, in the name of fees, for the honor of being enrolled as a Fellow, Licentiate, or Extra-Licentiate, of this extraordinary corporation. Although, this statement may appear incredible, its truth is unquestionable, and beyond contradiction: the College have actually taken advantage of their power, and

prosecuted to conviction, some persons, who had the temerity to infringe on the precincts of their legalized monopoly.—[*murmurs.*]—Is this liberty, and equality, towards all his Majesty's subjects? Are the Irish, and Scotch graduates in medicine, to be treated worse than quacks, if they presume to approach the English metropolis? The effect of such a state of medical legislation is, that nearly two millions of people, who reside within the limits of the prescribed district, are compelled to employ, or make their selections, from the very limited number of two hundred physicians! Gentlemen, I am happy to tell you, we have no such illiberal, or exclusive laws in this country, as far as regards the practice of medicine. No, the English, the Scotch, the French, the American, and the German physicians, may come here, and practise their profession, if called on, without the slightest molestation. It is true, that, “The King and Queen's College of Physicians in Dublin,” bear some resemblance in aristocratic pretensions, to “The Royal College of Physicians in London;” but, the former is, comparatively speaking, a harmless corporation; indeed, many of its Fellows, and Licentiates, are Gentlemen of high professional attainments, and liberal principles; who, even if they possessed arbitrary power, would not, in my opinion, wield it, to the injury either of their professional brethren, or the public welfare.—[*partial applause, which appeared to have*

originated with a knot of Fellows, and Licentiates of "The King and Queen's College of Physicians," who occupied a conspicuous part of the lecture-room.]

Gentlemen, I now beg your attention to a few observations, relative to the medical schools, which are usually connected with Universities. In approaching this topic, I am quite aware, that my motives may be impugned, and that I am liable to the imputation of acting from envious feelings, in any remarks which I may think it necessary to make on this subject. However, I have made up my mind, to stand by what I conceive to be the faithful discharge of the duty I have undertaken to perform ; and not to be scared from my purpose, by the apprehension of future consequences ; but, to place fairly, and, I trust, impartially, before you, such facts, as appear to me deserving of the attentive, and serious consideration of the medical students, of the present important epoch, in the annals of their intended profession. When those University schools were first established, they were much wanted, and of great utility ; for, at that time, the opportunities of acquiring professional information were exceedingly limited. But, when we reflect upon the numerous schools which have, of late years, been founded upon independent principles, and have already acquired, for excellence, an enviable celebrity ; we naturally ask, what further necessity is there for

the continuance of those corporate institutions, which have already fulfilled the intention of their founders? Having been originally based on a foundation, which nothing but the circumstances of the time of their birth could justify; the days of their usefulness have passed away, and the sooner they are abolished the better; for, constituted, and supported as they are, they can no longer be deemed conducive, either to the advancement of science, or the public welfare! In order that we may thoroughly understand the medical department of the Universities, let us first inquire how the professors are usually appointed? Generally speaking, by an irresponsible *non*-medical board. Yes, Gentlemen, this is a positive fact. Is it not much more probable, that the decision of such a tribunal would be determined by the private interests, rather than by the scientific attainments of the candidates? How can such a board of electors form a just estimate of the qualifications of the respective candidates, to discharge the duties of professors or lecturers, on subjects of which they, the electors, know little or nothing? What would be thought of a school of divinity, if the professors were appointed by a medical board of electors? What opinion would you entertain of a military school, if the nomination of its professors rested with a board of ecclesiastics?—[*laughter.*]—By thus examining, with the ordinary tests of analogy and common sense, the manner in which medical professors, in Universities, are

usually appointed, the defects of the present system becomes obvious to a person of the plainest understanding. The natural consequence is, that many of the professorial chairs are occupied by inefficient teachers ; yet, they *must* be well attended, and well paid ; for, as a general rule, the Universities, in the different parts of the United Kingdom, are so clanish in their mode of acting, that they oblige all students who wish to graduate in medicine, to take out admission tickets, and certificates, from their own professors. Now, is it not a great hardship, that my apprentice, who has an opportunity of learning Anatomy and Physiology, in this school, free of expense, must, because he is desirous to take out a Medical, as well as a Surgical Degree, pay four guineas to Doctor M'Cartney, merely for the privilege of being incarcerated, for six months in the Anatomical lecture-room, in Trinity College ?—*[laughter.]*—Well, this is not all, for the University professors are not only the instructors of medical students, but likewise the examiners, and the persons who grant Degrees to their own pupils ! What can be said in favour of a system, of which this very objectionable procedure constitutes a prominent part ? Do you think, it accords with our idea of the kindly feeling of human nature, to suppose that teachers could bring themselves, in the capacity of examiners, to act impartially by voting against their own pupils, and in this way injure

their future prospects in life? The thing is next to impossible; the more especially, as the examiners themselves must know very well, that *their* pupils had not a fair opportunity of acquiring professional information.—[*much laughter.*]

Gentlemen, I now beg your attention, to a few remarks on the want of uniformity which prevails in the regulations of the Dublin, London, and Edinburgh Colleges of Surgeons, as regards the item of hospital attendance. The Dublin College requires three years; the Edinburgh, one and a half; whilst the London is satisfied with one. I feel a pride in stating, that, in my opinion, the bye-law of the Irish College, in this respect, is the least objectionable. Give me leave to add, that there are other points, such as the comparative strictness of the examination of candidates, for Letters Testimonial; and the non-payment of officers, which might, in justice, be advanced as an argument in favour of its superiority, as a corporation, over the English and Scotch Colleges. But, nevertheless, I regret exceedingly, that I cannot claim for the Irish College, of which I am an humble member, that degree of perfection, and public approbation, which I fondly wish it was entitled to enjoy. We have fallen into the deplorable error of the Universities, in having a school attached to it, and to this unfortunate connexion, may be fairly attributed, whatever dissensions have arisen amongst us. It would ill

become me to speak disparagingly, either of that school, or its conductors ; but, at the same time, I feel that it would be a culpable affectation of delicacy, on my part, if I did not openly express here, as I have done elsewhere, my objection to the principle of discord and monopoly, involved in the fact of a school constituting a part, either of a medical or surgical corporation. It might be urged as an argument, in favour of the continuance of this school, that the professors must necessarily be efficient teachers, inasmuch as they are appointed by members of the body, who are, it is to be presumed, competent to form a correct judgment of the qualifications of the candidates. Here, I feel, that in order to render this question intelligible, it is necessary to apprise you, that the members of the Dublin College of Surgeons are, in common with those of most corporations, divided into two parties, which earnestly support their own respective sides, on all important questions of college politics. Such being the case, the annual election of officers, is determined by the numerical strength of the predominant party. Accordingly, the court of censors, consisting of six members and the president, with whom the election of professors rests, must be looked upon in the light of being a fortunate, or favoured few, who owe their official rank to the support of certain individuals. This is a kindness not easily forgotten by the censors, who are in gratitude bound to return

the compliment, as far as the extensibility of the consciences of corporate officers will permit, by appointing to the professorial chair, as soon as an opportunity shall offer, the candidate who may have the good fortune to be a favourite with a certain party. Furthermore, I beg to add, that four of the censors, together with the president, or, in his absence, the vice-president, constitute “a court,” and the *majority* of such a court, have the power of nominating the professor. With this explanation, Gentlemen, I will now leave you to form your own opinion, as to whether the mode of election is such as to justify the inference, that is but too often, and too inconsiderately drawn, as to the superiority of the lecturers in the school of the college, over those connected with other schools, which are supported on public principles, but from private sources. I admit, that it might be urged, with some degree of plausibility, in reply to me, by teachers in corporate schools, that “The fact of our being appointed professors by any board of electors, is some guarantee, both to students and the public, of our competency to discharge the duties allotted to us; but, you are a self-constituted lecturer, and ought, therefore, to be watched with an eye of suspicion, or discountenanced altogether.” It is quite true, that a man may either mistake or overrate his own capability, and, in this way, be induced to place himself in a position for which he was not at all

suited. Well, be it so ; such an adventurer cannot injure any person but himself : in the speculation, he must embark his money, his professional character, his industry, and all the energies of his mind, in order that he may have even a chance of success. Should his capability, as a teacher, fall short of his own calculation, his lecture-room will be avoided, and he must lose every thing ; yet, he has imposed upon no one ; he alone has become the dupe of his own folly, and the victim of his temerity. Had this speculator the good luck to be elected professor to a corporate school, how different would be the result. The outfit would cost him nothing, the title of “college professor” would, for a time at least, be considered, by some, a sufficient guarantee for his capability as a lecturer. The excellence of his theatre and museum, which were provided at the public expense, would present an imposing appearance, at the commencement of the session, which would naturally beget a desire in the minds of the inexperienced and unwary students, to take out the gaudy admission-tickets, which are headed with the seductive impress of the Royal Arms. Gentlemen, you may infer from this simple statement, that, whilst lecturers in corporate schools, no matter how incompetent they may be, are protected from a sudden fall by the buttresses of patronage and monopoly ; those otherwise circumstanced, are obliged to rely on their own exertions, and place

their confidence for support on the somewhat instable basis of public opinion.

Such professors of the college school as are members of the corporation, are eligible to be elected on the court of censors ; and, consequently, they may have, not only a voice in the election of each other, but, likewise, the power of examining, and voting for, or against, candidates for “ Letters Testimonial.” The professors, and their friends, have studiously availed themselves of their privileges in this respect ; accordingly, I believe, there has not been a single year, for the last twenty or upwards, in which one, two, or more, of the professors, were not members of the court of examiners ! This, I consider a very unfortunate circumstance, as regards the reputation of the college. Only think of men electing themselves,* and their colleagues ; and, examining, and granting Diplomas to their own pupils ! A Court of Censors should be, in my opinion, above suspicion, they never can, so long as they are permitted to examine, either their own pupils, or those of rival teachers. A monopoly in teaching, examining, and granting Diplomas, or Degrees, should not be allowed to any class of persons. For my own part, I am opposed to the principle of having teachers from *any* school

* At the *annual* election of Professors, such of them as happen to be members of the Court of Censors, take a part in the truly farcical ceremony of re-electing both themselves and their colleagues !!!

on the court of examiners. I am not singular in this opinion, for the Association of Apothecaries in London, have made a rule, some years back, to the effect, that no person shall be eligible to become a member of their court of censors, who has any connexion with a school. The council of the London College of Surgeons seems to be of a similar way of thinking, for, some time ago, when the Principals of the London University sought for a charter, to enable them to examine candidates, and grant Degrees in Medicine, &c. &c.; the council of the college sent forward a petition to the King, in opposition to the views of those Gentlemen, in which the following remarkable passage is to be found.

“Your petitioners are firmly convinced, that the occupations of teaching, and the power of examining, and conferring Degrees, ought to be exercised, as they now are, by distinct institutions; and, that the union, in one and the same institution, of these discordant attributes, must be attended with danger to the public welfare, on the numerous occasions, in which the interest of the teacher, and the duty of the examiner, would interfere with each other.”

In a conversation, which I had myself with Mr. Warburton, [in the committee-room — of the House of Commons, he told me, that the impropriety of having teachers examiners, was a fact

admitted by all witnesses, who had not a personal interest in supporting the opposite doctrine. So, Gentlemen, you may count on a change in this particular point; and, when turning in your mind, what school it would be your interest to attend the next session, it will be unnecessary for you to take into calculation, whether certain lecturers are members of the court of censors or not.—[*cheers and laughter.*]—From my experience of the bad effects of having a school connected with the Dublin College of Surgeons, I cannot, on the present occasion, avoid congratulating the members of the London and Edinburgh Colleges, on their good fortune, in not being encumbered with such a fertile source of discord and dissension.

I now beg to express my dissent to that extraordinary, anomalous, and unjust law, which disqualifies, or, I should rather say, renders ineligible, any person but a Member, or Licentiate, of the Dublin College, to be elected to, or hold the situation of surgeon to a county infirmary in Ireland! Only think, of such distinguished men as Guthrie, Lawrence, Liston, and Dupuytren, &c. being obliged to yield their pretensions to a stripling of yesterday, merely because *he* happened to have struggled through the examination of the Dublin College.—[*cheers and murmurs.*]

Gentlemen, I do not think it necessary to trouble you with many observations, relative to the discrepancies

which exist in the bye-laws, and regulations, of the Apothecaries' Halls in London and Dublin. The Association of Apothecaries in London require, as part of their curriculum, from candidates for their Diploma, certificates of attendance, for twelve or eighteen months, on the *medical* practice of a recognised hospital, or dispensary; whilst, the Governors of the Apothecaries' Hall in Dublin, do not seem to think it necessary, to demand from the candidates for their Licence, any proof whatever of their having attended to hospital practice. Neither the London or Dublin Halls require certificates of attendance, either on the practice of a *surgical* hospital, or on surgical lectures; yet both lay claim to their right of licensing the general practitioner. —[*laughter.*]—The privileges, or, I should rather say, the restrictions, which exist as regards the Members, and Licentiates, of both of these corporations, are very absurd, and unjust. An Irish apothecary cannot, as the law at present stands, open a shop, either in England or Wales, unless he shall have first complied with the regulations, and submitted to another examination, before the London Court of Examiners. In like manner, the English Apothecary is prevented practising his profession in Ireland, until he shall have conformed to the regulations, and submitted to a second examination at the Hall in Dublin. The absurdity of the present state of the law on this subject,

becomes still more palpable, when it is recollected, that both the London and Dublin apothecaries may, if they please, go, and open shops, and practise, without restraint or annoyance, in Scotland !

The selfish and coercive system, which pervades the three medical corporations in Ireland, appears to me, to be an intolerable grievance, of which students have much reason to complain. At Trinity College, no certificates, but those granted by University professors, will be recognised ; on the other hand, the College of Surgeons, in the true spirit of retaliation, will neither receive the certificates issued by the professors of any University, which will not recognise those given by the lecturers in their school ; nor those granted for attendance on the lectures delivered in the school connected with the Apothecaries' Hall ; and again, in return, the examiners at the hall, will not acknowledge the certificates of the lecturers in the School of the College of Surgeons. Are we still to be told, that the continuance of this system of reciprocal retaliation, and coercion, is necessary for the advancement of science, and the preservation of the public health ? The reply must be obvious, to the greatest tyro amongst you : I will, therefore, quit the prolific subject of corporate absurdities, and abuses, with the hope that I have already said sufficient, to give you some idea of the extent of their enormities, and the obvious necessity there exists for their speedy abolition.

Let us now turn our attention to the manner in which medical appointments to hospitals, and dispensaries, are usually determined in Great Britain and Ireland. The greatest possible want of uniformity, prevails in this department of medical policy in Dublin. For instance, the nomination of medical attendants to the Richmond Hospital, rests with the Irish government; in the Meath and Mercers' Hospitals, the medical officers appoint one another; in Stevens', and the Britain-street Lying-in Hospital, the election, I believe, rests with a limited board of governors; whilst, in the Jervis-street Infirmary, the governors at large have votes in the appointment of its medical officers. With the different electoral bodies, I have just mentioned, it is a well-known fact, that their decisions are more frequently determined by money, and feelings of a private, or personal nature, than by the professional attainments, or moral worth, of the candidates. When I express myself thus, I do not mean to say, that the electors in those different institutions, are in the habit of receiving bribes for their votes; no, but to convey the idea, that they are frequently consenting parties, to a pecuniary arrangement between the out-going officer, and one of the candidates for the vacant situation. I feel, that it would be disingenuous in me, to make such a statement, if I did not speak on the authority of some degree of experience in this subject. Gentlemen,

it must be a matter of consolation to every Medical Reformer, to know, that the abuses connected with this system, are perfectly understood in the proper quarter. By way of illustration, permit me to apprise you of a few questions, which were put to myself, on this important topic, by the chairman of the "Parliamentary Medical Committee." One of the first was to this effect: "Is it not notorious, that the elections for masters, which have taken place from time to time, at the Lying-in Hospital, in Britain-street, have been corrupt?" My answer was, as well as I can recollect, "Judging from what I have heard, from certain Irish witnesses, since I came into this room, they must have been so!" I was subsequently asked, if Mr. Crampton, and four of his apprentices, did not constitute five out of six, of the surgeons to the Meath Hospital? Here I set the learned Gentleman right, by stating, that "As yet, only three of Mr. Crampton's apprentices had been appointed surgeons to the hospital." I was next asked, if the medical and surgical offices in the Jervis-street Hospital, to which I belonged, were not bought and sold? You may guess what was my answer—[laughter.]—So much for the manner in which medical appointments are effected in Dublin; and I believe the mode of proceeding in the country parts of Ireland, is not less objectionable; sales are not only made; but patronage, and party feelings are brought into active

operation. A few years ago there was an election for a Surgeon to the Ennis Infirmary, and such was the degree of excitement produced on the occasion amongst the friends of the contending parties, that the County Clare was thrown into a state little short of insurrection—[*laughter.*]—Three or four years since, there was an election for a medical attendant to a dispensary in the neighbourhood of Dalkey, and the entire district, extending from Bray to Kingstown, was in a state of commotion, bordering on rebellion—[*renewed laughter.*]—I will not detain you with further proof of the defective manner, in which medical appointments take place in Ireland, but at once proceed to demonstrate that their mode of acting, in this regard, in England, is not less objectionable.

The system of patronage, interest, and nepotism, is so acted upon in London, that nothing else will succeed in obtaining for the most efficient man, even a chance of being appointed medical or surgical superintendent to any of the large metropolitan hospitals. With a view to illustrate the truth of this statement, I beg your attention whilst I read a passage or two from the Second Volume of the Report of the evidence lately given before the Parliamentary Medical Committee. The extract which I am about to read, is taken from the evidence of a Mr. King, a very distinguished medical gentleman, now Lecturer on Anatomy in the Blenheim-street School, London;

but who was educated principally in Paris, where he obtained some of the highest honors which can be conferred, according to the usage of the French system, as the just reward of talent and industry.

“ Were you ever a candidate for any hospital office in London ? Yes ; I was once a candidate, certainly.

“ What was the office, and where ? The Assistant Surgeoncy to St. George’s Hospital.

“ What was the result ? The result was, that I was given to understand by one of the full Surgeons of St. George’s Hospital, that no man had any chance of becoming a hospital Surgeon, unless he had been an apprentice or pupil (I forget which he said) to the hospital.

“ Had you remained in France, might you not, in the course of time, have become Surgeon to a French hospital ? I had a very good chance of becoming so : several of my former colleagues, of those who did not obtain the distinction that I did, are now Surgeons to Parisian hospitals.

“ And by the hospital regulations that you have referred to, you are precluded from aspiring to stations in this country, such as would be open to you in France ? Entirely precluded ! It is generally admitted, and avowed in public, that such are the regulations.

“ What do you mean by avowed ? Were I to become a candidate for a surgeoncy in a London

hospital, several of the hospital Surgeons who are friends of mine, would say to me, "Mr. King, the thing is impossible."

Gentlemen, only think of this, here is a gentleman of first rate professional attainments, solemnly declaring that he "had a very good chance" of obtaining in a foreign country, through the fairness of the system pursued there, that which it was deemed "*impossible*" for *him* to acquire in his own! I perceive by an account which I have read in a recent number of the *Lancet*, that the elections of medical officers to hospitals and dispensaries in the country parts of England, are conducted with as much disorder and excitement as they are in any part of Ireland. It is not long since a case in point occurred in Shrewsbury; there was there an election for Surgeon to the Salloppian Infirmary, attended with a good deal of parochial disturbance and boisterous speechification, which finally closed; the almost incredible number (*proxies* included) of 389 voters having polled, viz:

For Mr. Dickin,	221
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For Mr. Clement,	168
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Majority for Mr. Dickin,	53
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Gentlemen, I am vain enough to think that the simple though brief statement of facts which I have

just submitted for your contemplation, is quite sufficient to convince you that the present state of the medical profession in these countries cannot be deemed conducive either to the advancement of science or the public welfare, that it abounds with countless absurdities, inconsistencies and abuses, and that we should, in the name of science and suffering humanity, loudly demand from the legislature an efficient measure of MEDICAL REFORM. (*loud cheers.*)

It would, in my opinion, be quite out of place, were I, in my capacity of instructor, to occupy your valuable time with vague conjectures or idle speculations, relative to the plan of "medical reform" which I would recommend: I will not, therefore, presume to lay down, nay, even to suggest any specific plan of legislation on this important topic; but at the same time, I beg to express my entire confidence in the judgment, impartiality, good intentions, and self-disinterested motives of the gentleman who has taken up the subject, and who has, I will venture to assert, acquired by his talents, industry, and untiring zeal in the cause, more information on the subject of medical law and medical abuses, than any man in Europe—[*loud cheers.*]—Judging from the tenor of his examination, the plan of medical reform which I think he has in his mind, will resemble as much as possible the system which has been adopted and successfully

acted upon in France for upwards of forty years. In order to make you acquainted with that system which, I am persuaded, will serve as a model for British legislation, I will now briefly explain to you the leading points which characterize the medical policy of that country, as described in the tenth volume of the *Lancet* by the late Mr. Bennet, who for several years taught Anatomy in Paris.

“In 1792, the National Convention decreed the suppression of all universities, colleges, corporations, &c., throughout France. However, before the expiration of two years, they found it indispensable to provide for the education of medical men, and in consequence, Fourcroy and others were deputed to devise some system, which it was generally admitted should be founded on the principle, that “medicine and surgery were one and indivisible as the Republic!” The Faculty of Medicine was shortly after organised, and formed the model upon which the other Faculties were subsequently constructed.

In Paris, we at present find the following Faculties, who have intrusted to them the business of education in their respective departments, viz :

The Faculty of Theology.

The Faculty of Law.

The Faculty of Medicine.

The Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences.

The Faculty of Letters.

There are similar bodies on the same plan, and for the same purposes, in other great cities in France.

Now, the re-union of *all* the Faculties of any particular city, Paris for example, constitutes the Academy of that city; and the re-union of all the Academies of France constitutes *The University of France*.

The great officers of the University are a Grand Master, a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and a Council; they reside in Paris, and their jurisdiction extends over all the Academies in France; the accounts, expenditures, &c. are regulated by them, and they constitute a Court of Appeal.

Each Faculty confers the degree of Doctor at the expiration of four years' study, after several public examinations; but the Faculty of Sciences and those of Letters, confer, in addition, the subordinate degrees of Bachelor in Sciences, and Bachelor in Letters. To obtain these latter, a student has but to present himself for examination.

For the *Bachelorship* in Letters, he is examined in the classics, history, geography, and rhetoric; for the *Bachelorship* in Sciences, he is examined in the elements of mathematics, physics, natural history, chemistry, botany, &c.

Before a student is admitted to become a pupil at *any of the Faculties*, with a view of subsequently taking a degree, he must first possess the degrees

of Bachelor in Sciences and Bachelor in Letters, whereby a good primary education is insured on his part.

We proceed to detail the system of education prescribed at the Faculty of Medicine :—On presenting the degree of Bachelor in Sciences and Bachelor in Letters, a student is admitted as pupil, at the Faculty of Medicine, and thereon receives a ticket of admission, gratis, to all the courses of lectures delivered there.

In order to secure his presence, the student is obliged to register himself (take an *inscription*) four times a year, for which purpose, books are kept open by the Secretary of the Faculty, during fifteen days at the commencement of each quarter. The fact of his having inscribed himself sixteen times (which cannot be done in less than four years,) entitles him ultimately, to examination for degree.

A student is at liberty to attend any courses, public or private, he may deem useful ; but there are certain courses in each year which it is indispensable he should follow at the Faculty, and his presence is insured by rolls being occasionally called over, and absence punished by forfeiture of inscriptions. The following is the order prescribed for attendance on the lectures delivered at the Faculty of Medicine.

ATTENDANCE ON LECTURES.

INSCRIPTIONS.	WINTER COURSE.	SUMMER COURSE.
First year. 1, 2, 3, 4.	Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry.	Physics, Surgical Pathology, Botany.
Second year. 5, 6, 7, 8.	Anatomy, Physiology, Operative Surgery.	Hygiène, Pharmacy, Surgical Pathology, Surgical Clinical Lect's.
Third year. 9, 10, 11, 12.	Operative Surgery, Surgical Clinical Lect's.	Medical Pathology. Materia Medica, Medical Clinical Lect's.
Fourth year. 13, 14, 15, 16.	Medical Clinical Lect's. History of Medicine.	Medical Pathology, Legal Medicine, Medical and Surgical Clinical Lectures. Accouchmens.

Having completed his sixteen inscriptions, a student can demand to be examined for the degree.

There are five public examinations which he must undergo, and finally defend a thesis.

The examinations are conducted in the following manner, there being usually five candidates and three examiners. The morning of the day on which the first examination is to take place, a subject is placed at the disposal of the candidates, and each is called on to dissect some part. Subsequently, they meet in the public theatre, to which all persons are admitted, and are examined, during two hours, on Anatomy and Physiology. The second examination

on some future day, on Pathology and Nosology ; the third on Chemistry, Botany and Pharmacy ; the fourth on Hygiène and legal Medicine ; the fifth on the Practice of Medicine and Surgery, according as the candidate aspires to the degree of Doctor in Medicine, or Doctor in Surgery ; this is of little consequence, as either degree warrants a man practising either or both branches.

Finally, the candidate must defend, before five Examiners, a thesis written in the French or Latin language. On no two occasions has the candidate the same Examiner, so that altogether he has to undergo the ordeal of no less than twenty different Examiners.

It now remains to enumerate the cost of inscriptions, examinations, theses, &c. ; in fact, every expense attending the education of a Doctor in Medicine or Doctor in Surgery :—

	Francs.
15 Inscriptions, cost 50 francs each,	750
16th, or last Inscription, - - -	35
5 Examinations, 30 francs, - - -	150
Fees upon thesis, &c. - - -	165

Total, - 1,100, or 50 pounds.

The money thus received forms a general fund, from which the Professors are paid their salaries. They receive no fees whatsoever from the students, to whom the lectures and hospitals are thrown open gratis.

The election of Professors to the several Faculties

was, prior to the restoration of the Bourbons, determined by "Concours," or a public trial of merit, a system still adhered to in the disposal of the minor offices. When a vacancy occurs, the Dean of the Faculty summons a meeting of the Professors, and they select from their body a committee or jury (as it is termed) consisting of three, five, or twelve individuals, (according to the nature and responsibility of the vacant office,) who *swear* to act with impartiality as judges of the merits of the several candidates. Public notice being given of the Concours, on the appointed day, the jury take their seats in the amphitheatre of the Faculty, to which the public is indiscriminately admitted, and the candidates are placed in a separate apartment, from which they are not allowed to hold any communication with friends outside. The Concours open by each member of the jury placing a slip of paper in an urn. The questions are necessarily determined in some measure by the nature of the office to be disposed of,—for instance, the Concours for the anatomical chair would be principally on Anatomy, though by no means altogether confined to that subject; on the contrary, the whole range of medical science may be entered upon on these occasions. The questions being gathered in the urn, one is drawn, and the oldest candidate being introduced, is presented with it, he has a certain number of minutes, (varying from 7 to 15,) to

deliberate and arrange his ideas ; he is then required to speak upon it a certain number of minutes, twenty or thirty : a second candidate is introduced, and the same form is gone through with each successively. The trial is repeated on another day, when each is required to write upon a subject in the Latin language, without referring to books. Lastly, each is required to write a thesis within a given time, (a fortnight generally,) and all on different subjects.

On the day for the examination of the thesis they assemble as before. The senior candidate reads his thesis, and as he does so, his assertions are disputed, and he is further examined on every possible subject connected with it, not by the jury, but by *his competitors*, whose interest it is, to attack him on every weak point they can find, in order to put him “*hors du combat*.” Each undergoes successively the same ordeal, and finally the jury publicly declares the successful candidate. In the year 1822, the Faculty of Medicine of Paris was suppressed through political motives, and the election of Professors by Concours was discontinued when the Faculty was reorganised in the following year. A new office was then created, that of “*Agrègè*” or Fellow, their number is unlimited ; 24 were appointed by the government in the first instance, and it is now determined to elect a small number annually, and by Concours. When a

vacancy takes place amongst the Professors, the chair is now filled by the Government electing an individual from the Agrègès to fill it."

Such, gentlemen, was the system of French medical policy in force, in 1826, and I am not aware that any material alteration has since taken place: I think the plan of education laid down, both preliminary and professional, well calculated to effect the object intended. You may perceive that "the Concours" is the common portal, through which *all* aspirants to honorable distinction *must* pass, before they can arrive at that degree of eminence which their talents and acquirements entitle them to enjoy. It serves at once as a guarantee to the student for the efficiency of his instructor; and to the inmates of hospitals, as to the competency of their medical and surgical attendants. But it has been gravely said, "that the French system cannot be adopted in the British dominions without a complete revolution in existing institutions and arrangements; and we are seriously told, that it would be utterly impossible to infringe upon the regulations of the present Universities; in fact, that it would be next thing to sacrilege, even to attempt such an uncalled for act of innovation." Now, I must for my own part say, that although I am not altogether so fond of change, as to be delighted with it merely for novelty's sake; yet I cannot view the anticipated subversion of the

medical department of the Universities, in the light of a reckless revolution ; inasmuch as this branch has been more than tried, and found unsuited to the present times, and the purposes for which it was originally created, and is now superseded, in a great measure, or rendered worse than useless, by other institutions, which are not liable to the imputation of being based on monopoly, and supported on the same principle, aided by that of injustice and coercion ! What injury would it do the present University Medical Professors to release them from the arduous and somewhat sameless duty of reading their Lectures annually (some of which were composed half a century ago) and allowing them to retire on a moderate pension, which might be awarded by the Legislature, during their natural lives ? When I was under examination myself, certain questions were put to me, which conveyed the idea that the Dublin College of Surgeons was likely to be superseded by the establishment of a new medico-chirurgical board in Ireland ; and I was then so far an advocate for the maintenance (under certain modifications,) “ of ancient institutions, and vested interests,” that I felt it my duty to remonstrate against a plan of legislation which appeared to me, would have the effect of supplanting an institution which I was *sworn* to support. I was then, in reply, simply asked, “ What disadvantage could result to the

public from the abolition of a corporation, which was in many respects objectionable, when all its useful acts could be accomplished by another body?" I was silent, and felt acutely the reproach conveyed for my attempting to advocate the continuance of an establishment, the imperfections of which, I was previously obliged to acknowledge.

It may be said "that the principle of electing Medical Officers to Hospitals and Dispensaries "by Concours," would be altogether inapplicable in these countries, inasmuch as the majority of them are supported, chiefly, by private subscription, and quite independent of the government; and that the election of the Medical Officers is the natural prerogative of the subscribers." This point could, in my opinion, be arranged to the advantage of the public, without compromising, in the slightest degree, the right of voting at present enjoyed by "the subscribers." For instance, let us suppose, for argument's sake, that we had, quite independent of our present medical corporations, a central examining board established in Dublin, and that *all* candidates were, previous to the day of election, obliged to submit to a sort of filtering process, analogous to the Concours of the French, to be practised by this board: by this means the best qualified candidates could be ascertained, and their names forwarded to the governors at large, who might still retain their privilege of voting; but

would be obliged to vote for none but well qualified persons. It is only by an arrangement of this kind that the public can be protected from the incursions of ignorant pretenders, and that the pernicious influence of interest, nepotism, and money, can be effectively controuled. So long as human nature remains what it is, until the principle I have mentioned shall be adopted as regards medical appointments to public institutions, they will continue to be objects of traffic and speculation and be obtained only by purchase and patronage.

Gentlemen, a report has been, of late, industriously circulated by interested persons in this city, to the effect, that Mr. Warburton has found the subject of medical legislation so beset with difficulties, and himself so bewildered in the labyrinth of his foolish undertaking, that he has altogether abandoned his original intentions, and that there is already an end to the question of medical reform. Oh! this is, comparatively speaking, a harmless, although a perfectly untrue statement, both as regards this gentleman, and the very important subject, in which his high sense of public duty has involved him. Were I to detail to you the groundless calumnies, which have been unblushingly sent forth against this able statesman, or mention the opprobrious epithets, with which he has been assailed, (aye, and that too, by unworthy and ungrateful individuals, who have been enjoying, for the last two years, the

great and unexpected advantages of his labours, in the working of the Anatomy Bill in Ireland,) you could scarcely bring yourselves to believe in the truth of my assertions. Those persons affect to consider him a vulgar, unprincipled radical, who would, for the love of change and popularity, subvert, if he could, “all vested rights and ancient institutions.” I cannot describe to you the feelings of disgust I entertain for those calumniators, on hearing the unfounded, unwarrantable, and unjust imputations, which they have so gratuitously advanced against this excellent and self-disinterested man! What personal interest can he have in the subject of medical reform? None whatever. If he were influenced in his conduct as a member of the legislature, by a love of popularity, is it probable that he would have brought into parliament the “Anatomy Bill?” No, he would not; for, there never was introduced to the notice of a legislative assembly, a question so fraught with popular prejudice. This bill, although founded on the wisest views, both as regards science and humanity; yet it was based on the principle of legalizing the sale of human bodies. Gentlemen, he is actuated solely by a sincere desire to contribute to the public welfare, as far as in him lies; and those who would fain persuade themselves, that he will be driven from his purpose by clamour, will, ere long, be grievously disappointed—[*cheers.*]—The question, on which

he has bestowed the energies of his comprehensive mind, is not one of a sectarian or party character, and, consequently, not one, regarding which, politicians are likely to disagree. If it were a subject of such a description, I would be the last person to introduce its discussion into this theatre. On the contrary, *all* parties, in parliament, have unlimited confidence in the purity of his motives, and the superiority of his knowledge of medical law, and medical abuses ; it is therefore highly probable that whatever bill of medical reform he may deem fit to bring into the House of Commons, during the ensuing session, will be speedily adopted, and become the law of the land—[*loud cheers.*]

Gentlemen, I feel that I have trespassed too long on your valuable time, and in conclusion, I beg to thank you, collectively, and individually, for the respectful attention with which you have listened to me ; you have treated my observations with feelings very different, I imagine, from those with which they will be received elsewhere, by individuals who have a personal interest in the continuance of the present system. Indeed, I should not be at all surprised, if my act of to-day, would be made a pretext for another ; and the last attack, upon the conductors of the Peter-street School. Well, be it so, I fear not the result. We have, in more dangerous times, steered our bark of science, with safety, through the shoals and quicksands

of invidious intrigue: she has boldly withstood the storm of corporate invective, when the impotent breakers of calumny, and misrepresentation, were obliged to resolve themselves into the contemptible froth and nothingness of their origin! Our present disposition is to sail through the smooth waters of amity and peace, with all our professional brethren; however, should a fitting occasion arise, we shall be again ready to launch into the ocean of strife, to nail our colours, inscribed with the salutary motto of "MEDICAL REFORM," to the mast; and then to contend for victory with the enemy, until we shall either conquer or perish in the attempt.

(The delivery of the concluding sentence of this admirable address, was followed by loud cheers from all parts of the lecture-room, which were continued for some minutes after the Lecturer retired.)

ERRATA.

In page 4, for “embrio” *read* “embryo.”

———— 9, for “vissionary” *read* “visionary.”

———— 23, the name of the Marlborough-street School was omitted, by mistake; and in the same page the word “seven” should have been “eight.”